

# **DEAN'S PANEL**

## **DAY 1 – MONDAY AUGUST 15, 2011**

### **Commentary from Panelists**

#### **Nick Coady, Dean: Faculty of Social Work**

- Academic life can be all consuming; be mindful of letting it creep into your home time; set boundaries (e.g., limit answering work email after hours); take all your vacation – rejuvenate
- Consult with senior colleagues about matters such as tenure and promotion
- Try not to get caught up in the politics of things (departmental, Faculty, institutional)
- Build exercise into your day – good for your physical and mental well-being
- Remember Nick's story of rocks, pebbles, sand, and beer: the rocks are the important things in life (your family, yourself, your friends), the pebbles represent your job, your house, your car, etc. and the sand is everything else – don't sweat the small stuff and enjoy a beer (or beverage of choice every once in a while)

#### **Bill Banks, Acting Dean: School of Business and Economics**

- Network with other new faculty, especially those not in your discipline
- Choose the right role model to guide you in your research, writing, teaching and socializing (preferably not someone who is your supervisor or who is too far removed from the process and practices most relevant to you)
- Review the CVs of your academic colleagues – especially those recent (last five years) to the tenure and promotion process – their CVs should provide a sense of what is considered sufficient to obtain tenure
- As a faculty member you are now a role model for your students; model what and how you want your students to act (e.g., model academic and personal integrity)
- Find a mentor – social/instructional/scholarship – refer to the brochure in your package

#### **Bruce Arai, Dean: Brantford Campus**

- Tips and notes for tenure and promotion
  - o the tenure process is stressful regardless of publication status
  - o tenure decisions takes into consideration not just teaching, but research and service also (to Laurier, profession, etc.); early on in your career, if you're going to focus on one area more than another, emphasize research (see section 15 of your collective agreement for more information on the tenure process - [http://www.wlu.ca/documents/36333/2008-2011.Full-time\\_CA.final.pdf](http://www.wlu.ca/documents/36333/2008-2011.Full-time_CA.final.pdf))
  - o at the same time, try your best to balance teaching, research, service – be strategic
  - o keep in mind instructor evaluation forms – do well, but don't go out of your way to get a "7" at the start of your career
- Start thinking of preparing for the tenure process today; the publication process can take considerable time; a focus on publishing journal articles versus books was recommended given that books can take longer to come out and are potentially subject to more delays; be mindful though of what forms of scholarship are valued by your discipline/department

- Publishing thesis – don't get too tied up in thesis publication – try not to think of it as your life's work – your thesis is a stepping stone to your academic career
- Whenever possible, try to do your work in your office versus at home – the transition times between home and work can help you to delineate the important rocks from pebbles – you're potentially more productive at home than at work

### **Michael Carroll, Dean of Arts**

- quoted from *Chronicle of Higher Education* article – top most clicked stories in past year – “Dr. Crazy's Top Ten Tips for Avoiding Burnout”
  - o give yourself permission to pause and reflect; burnout comes out with spreading yourself too thin
  - o surround yourself with people who make you feel good about yourself
  - o cultivate curiosity around things not associated with your job
  - o cultivate curiosity in your teaching life
  - o cultivate curiosity in your research (topics, approaches)
  - o cultivate curiosity in the future of your institution and your department
  - o stop your “bitching” (quoting from article)
  - o make ambitious goals for yourself, but have a second tier of goals that you can fall back on that are reasonable and doable
  - o allow yourself time and space to regroup and reflect – in doing so you can pull yourself out of a burnout situation

### **Colleen Holt, Dean of Education**

- five different levels of service that you can think about; be aware of all levels, even if you don't do all five -- think variety
- (1) Departmental Level
  - o get involved at departmental meetings – let your voice be heard (e.g., departmental meetings, retreats, committees)
  - o volunteer for tasks
  - o go to departmental social functions - unwind, connect
- (2) Faculty Level
  - o attend meetings open to all faculty
  - o collaborate on projects/initiatives with your colleagues within and across departments
- (3) Research Level
  - o collaborate on research with your academic colleagues
  - o check out the different research centres at Laurier; connect with other researchers; volunteer to help out with various research projects – build your CV and publication record in the process
  - o broaden your thinking and opportunities for collaboration with others
  - o connect with the Office of Research (e.g., grant writing support, budget development, funding opportunities, etc.)
- (4) University Level
  - o join committees whenever possible – choose committees that interest you

- go to community events, town hall meetings – get to know people while developing an awareness of yourself by others across the university – you never know whom you will meet (e.g., Congress 2012 at Laurier)
- volunteer - lots of opportunities @ Laurier – students are volunteer oriented / service learning; if you're interested in community activism – this is the place to be
- (5) Professional Level
  - service to the professional community (e.g., join conference committees, serve as a reviewer for conference proposals, journals, etc. – benefit: professional development opportunity and awareness of expectations for research)
  - sit on professional committees, boards, other
- Cautionary note: be selective and purposeful in what committees etc. you choose to become involved with; don't volunteer too much; dovetail service with research and/or teaching AND if you're having trouble making a decision about which committee to volunteer for – go to your chair or dean to ask for advice

### **Tamas Dabozsy, Acting Dean: Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies**

- Laurier has a growing and active graduate community at Laurier
- If you are supervising and teaching at the graduate level – familiarize yourself with the practices and processes of your graduate program
- Talk to your program's graduate coordinator; he/she will be well versed on all matters student and faculty related
- Don't assume that all institutional environments / cultures are the same; understand that there are differences and respect them

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## **Questions and Answers**

- I want to develop a blended learning course. What do I need to do/know?
  - Consult with your department to identify process and work with Teaching Support Services to design online and face-to-face components
  - be proactive – bring ideas forward to area head and chair before getting too far in the development process
  - mindful of collective agreement provision in CAS agreement that faculty must uphold 36 contact hours
- What is the place of student evaluations in the tenure process, merit, etc.
  - One of several measures in tenure / review process
  - In looking at student ratings, always look at how you compare to your department and faculty to assess where you are in the ranks (the bigger picture)
  - Always include an informal written evaluation to get feedback from your students about their experience in the classroom and your teaching
  - Contact Teaching Support Services to help develop mid-semester feedback tools and collect feedback

- If I want to initiate new innovation in my class and experienced an initial dip in evaluation ratings, will I be penalized now or later?
  - Yes and no....evaluations are looked at cumulatively
  - If you are truly concerned about your ratings, you can prepare a written letter explaining the situation and submit it to your dean for inclusion in your official file
  - Consideration is given too for those who are just starting out
  - Some courses and certain venues understood by program/department to potentially yield lower evaluations (leeway is extended in such cases)
  
- When do I go to the dean versus the chair versus the VPA?
  - Start with chair unless you have an issue with chair (follow chain of command); same holds for students – start with professor, then chair, etc.
  - Direct questions about tenure and promotion/ research to your chair/dean
  - Direct questions related to personal career goals to dean
  
- My life as a dean would be easier if.....
  - faculty and staff were more collegial (Nick)
  - everybody could comprise a little bit better; willing to see the middle ground; listen to others and be open to other ideas/points of view (Bill)
  - people were a little less conspiracy oriented (Bruce)
  - there was a willingness amongst faculty and staff to think of the Faculty as a whole (Michael)
  - everyone read information provided to them carefully (Colleen)
  - people were more mindful of theirs and others' schedules and times – so much of what we do is contingent on other people -- this needs to be taken into account in decision-making and planning (Tamas)